

REMARKS

These remarks are in response to the Final Office Action dated August 5, 2010. This response is accompanied by a Request for Continued Examination. Applicant hereby requests a three month extension of time and authorization is given to charge all appropriate fees, as well as credit any overpayments to Deposit Account No. 50-0951.

At the time of the Office Action, claims 1-12 were pending in the application. In the Office Action, claims 1-12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a). Claims 1-12 were also provisionally rejected on the ground of nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting. The rejections are discussed in more detail below. Applicant thanks the Examiner for the helpful telephone interview relating to this application that was held on February 3, 2011.

I. Claim Rejections Based on Art

Claims 1-12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 4,353,730 to Kinno ("Kinno"), in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,532,155 to Golant et al. ("Golant") in view of U.S. Patent No. 3,309,619 to Futer ("Futer"). Applicant respectfully traverses the rejections.

Claim 1 was previously amended to recite the process of reusing at least part of the fluidification air coming out from said cooling fluid bed of the finished granules by feeding it into the granulation fluid bed, where at least part of the fluidification air coming out from the cooling fluid bed of the finished granules that is reused and fed into the granulation fluid bed is used as fluidification air of said granulation fluid bed. Support for this feature may be found, for example, in paragraph [0017] of the specification.

As discussed, Applicant respectfully submits that the Office Action misinterprets *Kinno*. Present claim 1 requires that at least a portion of the fluidification air coming out from the cooling fluid bed is reused into the granulation fluid bed. As already discussed in the Applicant's arguments filed September 30, 2009, *Kinno* relates to a totally different process than that of the present application.

In this respect, during the telephone interview the Examiner agreed to reconsider Applicant's previous arguments that explained that in *Kinno*, the fluidification air is fed only and solely to the cooling fluid beds. Such beds are indicated in *Kinno* with reference sign "B" in

Figure 3A and are also identified by the presence of the perforated plate 8 (typical for a fluid bed) as shown in Figures 3-7. The fluidification air fed to the cooling fluid beds through opening 6 exits the latter through opening 26 and might be sent, by means of pipeline 17 to a separator 27 (see for instance *Kinno*, column 4, lines 1-9). The cooling fluid beds are also provided with side openings 28, 29 for the inlet and outlet of the granules, respectively (see for instance, *Kinno*, column 3, line 66 to column 4, line 1).

There is no single part of *Kinno* that discloses or suggests feeding at least a part of the fluidification air coming out from the cooling fluid bed of the finished granules into the granulation bed. In particular, column 6 line 41 to column 7 line 22 of *Kinno*, mentioned by the Office Action at page 2, is not concerned with such a feature. This portion of *Kinno* merely relates to the treatment of the granules leaving the last granulation stage, where additional cooling may or may not be provided. Even in the case of providing an additional cooler, no mention is made in *Kinno* of the claimed "reusing" step.

Additional arguments with respect to the non-relevance of *Kinno* may also be found in Applicant's previous response.

Applicant respectfully submits that the rejection to independent claim 1 has been overcome. Dependent claims 2-12 depend upon claim 1 and should be allowable for at least the same reasons stated above, as well as because of the further features recited therein.

II. Double Patenting Rejection

Claims 1-12 were provisionally rejected on the ground of nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-10 of copending Application No. 10/599,751. The double patenting rejection should be considered moot in view of the claim amendments and also in view of the arguments set forth above and in Applicant's previous response. Withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

III. Conclusion

For the foregoing reasons, all claims are believed to relate to patentable subject matter, and to be in condition for allowance. Prompt issuance of a Notice of Allowance is thus respectfully requested.

Applicant has made every effort to present claims which distinguish over the prior art, and it is thus believed that all claims are in condition for allowance. Nevertheless, Applicant invites the Examiner to call the undersigned if it is believed that a telephonic interview would expedite the prosecution of the Application to an allowance. In view of the foregoing remarks, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and prompt allowance of the pending claims.

Respectfully submitted,

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Mark D. Passler
Registration No. 40,764
Sarah E. Smith
Registration No. 50,488
AKERMAN SENTERFITT
Post Office Box 3188
West Palm Beach, FL 33402-3188
Telephone: (561) 653-5000